

TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE  
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
February 23, 2016

**CALL TO ORDER:** 6:37 p.m.

**INVOCATION:** Father John Plavcan – St. Joan of Arc Church

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**ROLL CALL:** Mr. Spann, Mrs. Miano and Mrs. Uzelac were absent. All other members were present.

**PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND REMONSTRATIONS:**

President Hardaway congratulated the Merrillville High School Girls Basketball team for winning Sectionals for their fourth consecutive year.

Kyle Allen, Lake County Commissioner introduced himself to the Council. He informed them that he was willing to be of service to the Council as well as to the citizens of the Town of Merrillville.

President Hardaway read an invitation from Geminus Community Partners. The Council members were invited to attend a Candlelight Vigil in Honor of Child Abuse Prevention month. The event will take place on Tuesday, April 19, 2016 at 6 p.m. at Chateau Banquets.

President Hardaway acknowledged the recent passing of the Highland Clerk Treasurer, Mike Griffin's father.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

Approval of the Accounts Payable Register Voucher dated February 23, 2016. Approval of Town Council Meeting Minutes of February 9, 2016. Mrs. Barron made a motion to approve and was seconded by Ms. LaMarca. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

**STANDING COMMITTEES:**

**BUDGET & FINANCE:**

Mr. Pettit stated the town's 2016 budget was reduced by \$1.2 million by the state. Discussion among the Council took place in regards to the budget cuts as well as the impact of the assessed values for big-box stores. The town could lose more than \$2 million and suffer future financial distress if assessed value appeals of several big-box stores are successful. In addition to Merrillville paying the stores back for previous years, the assessed value appeals could have drastic future effects on tax increment financing districts in town. All of the big-box stores are in TIF districts, and there are bonds associated with those districts. Mr. Pettit said if assessed values of big-boxes drop, future property tax draws in TIF districts likely would only go to paying debt service and interest for those bonds, and the TIF project funds would suffer.

**PUBLIC WORKS:**

Mr. Spann was absent, no report.

**COUNCIL AFFAIRS:**

Mrs. Uzelac was absent, no report.

**PERSONNEL POLICY & EMPLOYEE BENEFITS:**

Mrs. Barron welcomed Vicki Bunnell to her new position as Director of Code Enforcement.

**PUBLIC SAFETY:**

Mrs. Uzelac was absent, no report.

**PARKS & RECREATION:**

Ms. LaMarca had no report. Jan Orlich updated the council on the progress of switching to a new software program. She also mentioned that the Parks Department will be taking part in the Crossroads Chamber of Commerce Reality Store at Pierce Middle School in April. Ms. Orlich said they are working on the 2016 Spring/Summer Park catalog. She provided a recap for the upcoming Park events.

**ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS:**

Mrs. Barron had no report. Mr. Lake provided various Stormwater updates. He mentioned that Stormwater is submitting an application for the Indiana American Water Environmental Grant. Mr. Lake said IDEM provided more insight on permit changes and a new EPA electronic reporting system for MS4 Regulations in an effort to reduce paperwork for the process.

**ELECTIONS & PUBLIC RELATIONS:**

Ms. LaMarca stated the next Parade Committee meeting will take place on March 1<sup>st</sup> at 5:30 p.m. She said that letters will be sent out to all Merrillville businesses seeking donations to help fund the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:**

Mr. Pettit mentioned the confirmatory resolution for economic revitalization area will be discussed later this meeting.

**UTILITY LIAISON:**

Mrs. Barron had no report.

**ABANDONED PROPERTIES:**

President Hardaway spoke about the upcoming changes related to how code enforcement issues will be handled. This subject will be included in the blight hearings as opposed to going through the Court division.

**GENERAL ORDERS:**

**FIRST READING ORDINANCES:**

None

**SECOND READING ORDINANCES:**

**Ord. 16-03:** An Ordinance of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, appropriating additional monies within the 2015 GO bond for the year 2016 not included in the current budget. Mr. Pettit made a motion to approve the ordinance and was seconded by Mrs. Barron. There was no discussion or public comment. The motion carried by a 4-0 roll call vote.

**Ord. 16-04:** An Ordinance of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, appropriating additional monies within the 2015 RDC bond for the year 2016 not included in the current budget. Mr. Pettit made a motion to approve the ordinance and was seconded by Mrs. Barron. There was no discussion or public comment. The motion carried by a 4-0 roll call vote.

**Ord. 16-05:** An Ordinance of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, appropriating additional monies within the Firefighters equipment fund for the year 2016 not included in the current budget. Mr. Pettit made a motion to approve the ordinance and was seconded by Mrs. Barron. There was no discussion or public comment. The motion carried by a 4-0 roll call vote.

**RESOLUTIONS:**

**Res. 16-09:** Confirmatory resolution of the Town Council of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, designating an economic Revitalization area. There was no public comment. Mr. Pettit made a motion to approve the resolution and was seconded by Mrs. Barron. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

**BZA ACTIONS:** None

**OLD BUSINESS:** None

**NEW BUSINESS:** None

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

All public comment is recorded on an audio file and kept on file in the Clerk-Treasurer's Office at Town Hall.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Board of Zoning Appeals meeting, February 24, 2016 at 6:30 p.m.

Stormwater Management Board meeting, March 1, 2016 at 4:30 p.m.

Plan Commission workshop, March 1, 2016 at 6:30 p.m.

Ethics Summit, March 2, 2016 at 8:30 a.m. at the Avalon (registration deadline 2/24/16)

Abandoned Blighted Properties Committee meeting, March 3, 2016 at 11:00 a.m.

Police Commission meeting, March 4, 2016 at 8:00 a.m.

Town Council meeting, March 8, 2016, at 6:30 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT:** A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Pettit and seconded by Mrs. Barron.

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**Richard Hardaway, President**

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**Eugene Guernsey, Clerk-Treasurer**